Community News

JSC hosting Earth Day celebration

Grassroots observance April 22 includes radio show broadcast

By Sandra Parker

During the last Presidential election, Americans sent a powerful message to Congress, that clean water and air continue to be important priorities.

JSC's Environmental Services Office once again is organizing an Earth Day celebration for all employees at the center. This year's event, which will focus on ways to reduce, reuse and recycle in order to "Get Your Earth's Worth," will be held from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. Tuesday, April 22, at the Gilruth Center.

Americans first conveyed their concern for the environment on April 22, 1970, when millions of citizens participated in the first Earth Day event. In keeping with its history, this year's Earth Day is a grassroots, voluntary event. It offers everyone an opportunity to celebrate and protect the environment.

JSC's observance will mirror this grassroots emphasis. Workshops, exhibits, astronaut autographs, solar car races and other demonstrations are planned in the ballroom. Photographs from a Photo Contest will be displayed just inside the entrance.

John Burrows and Randy Lemmon of the KTRH radio show "Garden Line" will be broadcasting live from the Gilruth this year. Among the exhibitors, the Houston Museum of Natural Science will provide a rain forest display, Environment Associates will have an exhibit on environmentally designed homes that prevent sick building syndrome and use recycled materials, Houston Lighting and Power will show employees ways to conserve energy and the City of Houston will display methods for water conservation.

Closer to home, the Government Services Administration booth will display information about the numerous environmentally friendly products offered to JSC organizations.

Employees are invited to visit the registration table for a chance to win door prizes. Prizes include an international globe clock, a canvas portfolio, gardening supplies, bird houses and other Earth Day surprises. At the Pledge Booth, employees may receive a tote bag in return for their pledge to begin a recycling activity at home or work.

Other prizes and giveaways will include Earth Day caps, mugs, stress balls and more.

The planning for the first Earth Day event began in 1969 when then-Sen. Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin proposed a nationwide "teach-in" on environmental issues. Thousands of schools and colleges held seminars and discussions on environmental topics. People in towns and cities across the country demonstrated their concern about air and water pollution in a wide variety of ways.

Through the first Earth Day, the concept of ecology (the relationship of living things to one another and their environment) became more widely understood.

As a result of that first Earth Day, Congress consolidated the major pollution control programs and created the Environmental Protection Agency.

Earth Day Workshop Schedule

Employees who want to learn how to help the environment may visit the Gilruth Center and attend workshops in Rm. 217. Here's the schedule:

11 a.m.: Birding on the Texas Coast, featuring Tom Scarsella
Noon: Environmentally Designed Homes, with Laverne Williams
Noon: Model solar car races will be held in the Gilruth Center parking lot
1 p.m.: Air Quality in the Bay Area, featuring Diane Sheridan

Internet Information

Information on the Earth Photograph Contest, the Original Art Coloring Contest and the 5K fun run 2K walk April 19 can be obtained from the Earth Day Home Page at: http://www4.jsc.nasa.gov/earthday/

Safe Disposal Locations

Once a year numerous communities and local industries sponsor a "Household Hazardous Materials Collection Day." This year the event will be from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday, April 19, at the following locations around town:

Clear Lake: University of Houston-Clear Lake, 2700 Bay Area Blvd., Bayou Bldg., North Student Parking Lot "D"
Baytown: Fire/Rescue Maintenance Facility, 201 East Wye Drive
Deer Park: Transfer Station, 610 Old Underwood Road
North Channel: Wallisville Annex Court House, 14350 Wallisville Road
Pasadena: Memorial Stadium, 2902 Dabney at Burke
Pearland: Pearland High School, Highway 35

The following items WILL be accepted (maximum container size is one gallon):

Automotive products such as waste oil, antifreeze, solvents, oil filters, unmounted tires (12-24″ rim size), batteries, brake fluids and transmission fluid.

Gardening products including pesticides, such as ant and roach killers.

Paint products such as thinners and solvents, latex and oil paint, spray cans, strippers, lacquers, turpentine and wood preservatives.

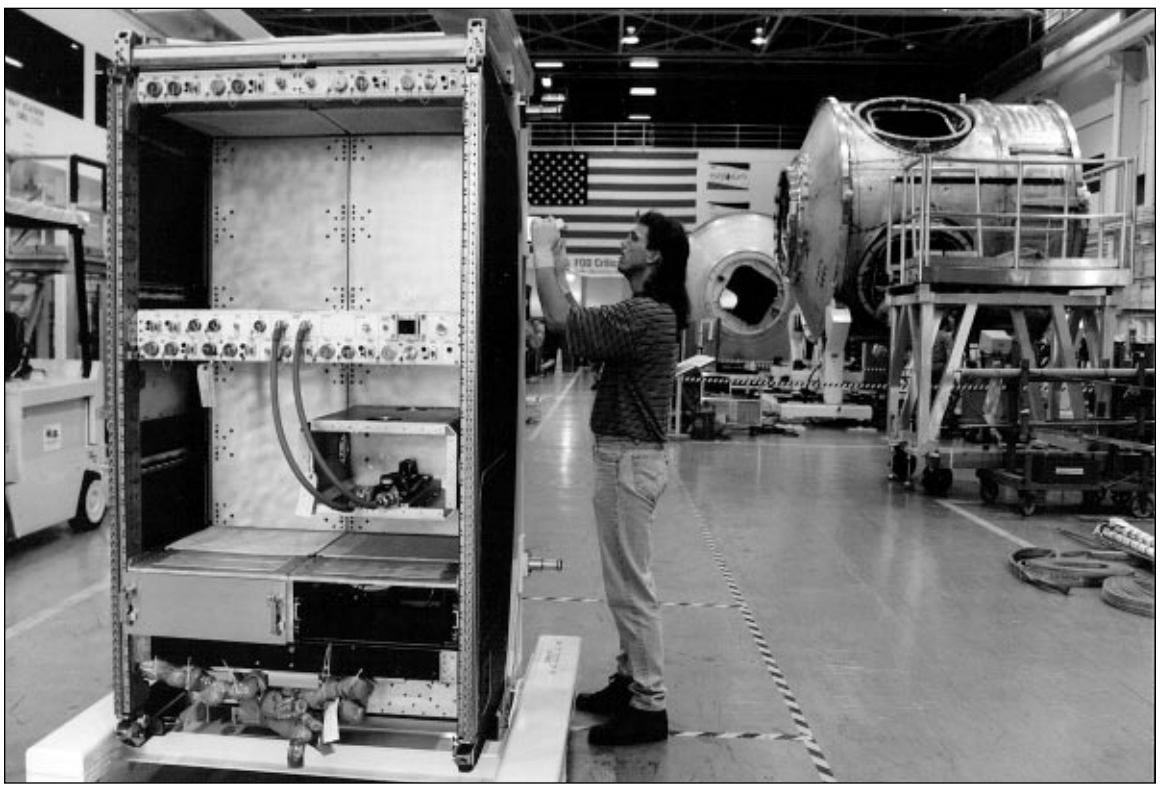
Cleaning products including drain cleaners, oven cleaners, bleach, cleaning solvents and spot removers, ammonia and concentrated cleaners.

Other household items such as moth balls, polishes and pool chemicals.

The following items WON'T be accepted at any of these locations:

Waste from commercial businesses, radioactive waste, PCBs and dioxins, explosives and gunpowder, compressed gas cylinders or medical waste.

Employees who have questions about toxicity should call: Galveston: (409) 765-1420 or Texas State Poison Center in Houston: (713) 654-1701.



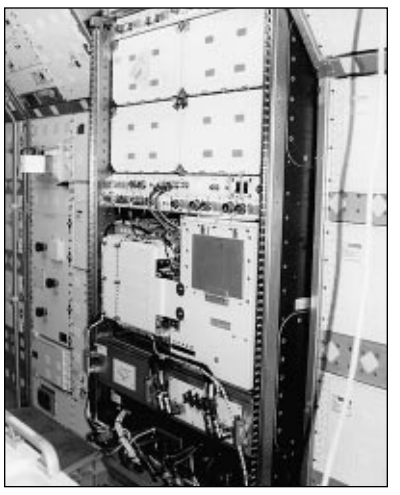
Photos Courtesy of Boeing Defense and Space Group

Above: With International Space Station modules in the background, a Boeing employee works on the Expedite the Processing of Experiments to the Space Station, or EXPRESS, rack to prepare it for shipment to the Kennedy Space Center for STS-83. Center: Inside the Microgravity Science Laboratory in *Columbia*'s cargo bay, researchers will test the EXPRESS rack's ability to put their experiments in operation in just 11 months.

Boeing builds experiment rack

Onboard the STS-83 Microgravity Science Laboratory is an International Space Station rack that may allow scientists quicker, easier and more affordable access to space.

The EXPRESS rack is designed to provide multiple smaller payloads with quick, simple integration thanks to standardized hardware interfaces and a streamlined approach. This "plug-in and go" rack, built by Boeing Defense and Space Group, will allow experiments to easily transfer from the shuttle to the International Space Station.



EXPRESS stands for Expedite the Processing of Experiments to the Space Station. The rack will allow researchers to have experiments operating on-board the space station in just 11 moths or sooner after signing a single integration agreement. In the past, researchers have had to wait three years or more to get their experiments in space.

"The EXPRESS rack provides a set of standard payload interfaces and we are matching that with a quick and simple integration process," said Annette Sledd, NASA EXPRESS project manager. "The goal is to provide the maximum science in the shortest time for minimum cost, and we have done that with the EXPRESS rack."

The EXPRESS science payload system was built by Boeing in Huntsville, Ala. It is designed to reduce the time, complexity and expense that is historically associated with orbital research. Experiments may be controlled by the crew on-board from the experiment or the rack's laptop computer, or operated via uplink from the ground from the U. S. operations center or a remote facility.

"This pathfinder rack was developed in just two years with a small, multi-disciplined team," said Ted Davis, Boeing's EXPRESS rack manager in Huntsville. "One of our biggest challenges was being the first to take a piece of space station-developed hardware off the production line and integrating it with the Spacelab interfaces and requirements."

The EXPRESS rack on STS-83 is made of graphite components and weighs about 570 pounds without experiments. It has eight single middeck lockers and two standard interface rack drawers. Included in the subsystems are an avionics air assembly that will cool experiments, power and protection subsystems and experiments. It also has a communication link between experiments, the Spacelab data systems and ground controllers. During STS-83, the systems will simulate the command and control link for the space station. After STS-83, the rack's performance will be evaluated and eight will be built for the station.

JSC Safety Alert

Evacuation of facilities when the fire alarm bell activates

What happened

Recently the fire alarm was activated in Bldg. 1. The emergency was terminated before the evacuation was complete and the people who had left the building were told to return. This caused confusion among the people who were still in the building trying to evacuate.

Outcome of the investigation

When the Fire Protection Specialist (FPS) arrived at the building he was told by a fire alarm technician that the emergency needed to be stopped since the alarm was caused by a procedural mix-up. The FPS terminated the emergency and tried to stop any further unnecessary evacuation of the facility. Termination of the emergency was done much too quickly, causing confusion to people who were still in the stairwells evacuating the building.

What you can do

If you hear a fire alarm bell:

- Leave the building immediately using the exit routes shown on the evacuation diagram on your floor.
- Don't use the elevators
- Shut down hazardous operations and secure classified material if you have time.
- Go to a safe area designated by your supervisor that is at least 75 feet from the building until you get further instructions.

What is being done

Emergencies will not be terminated until all physically able persons have evacuated from a building. Physically challenged persons and their buddies will be notified of the termination at the area of rescue assistance.